

# 43RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION, INC. "KEN'S MEN"



## NEWSLETTER 117<sup>th</sup> EDITION JANUARY 2011

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Web site: [www.kensmen.com](http://www.kensmen.com)

**Headquarters Squadron**

**63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron**

Charles Rauch (2011)  
Robert R. Richardson (2012)

**64<sup>th</sup> Squadron**

Robert W. Cooper (2011)  
Charles F. McClenny (2012)

**65<sup>th</sup> Squadron**

James W. Eide (2011)  
Samuel F. Commons (2012)

**403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron**

Robert P. Mangan (2011)  
Francis J. Drab (2012)

**Past Presidents**

Robert Butler 1981-1984\*  
George L. White 1985-1987\*  
William H. Wilson, Jr. 1988-1991\*  
Dale F. Barr, Jr. 1992-1993\*  
Max Osborn 1994-1995\*  
James T. Murphy 1996-1997\*  
Samuel F. Commons 1998-1999  
Max M. Axelsen 2000-2001  
Roger T. Kettleson 2002-2003  
Charles Rauch 2004-2005  
Jim Cherkauer 2006-2007  
James Thompson Jr 2008  
Eldon "Bud" Lawson 2009-2010

\*=Deceased

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

My term as President of this Association will have ended by the time you read this. I began the writing on the anniversary of that famous day of history, "the day that will live in history." December 7, 1941, now 69 years ago. I'm sure that many of you, as I, recall the day vividly. But once again, I was reminded that the historic significance of the date and the incident are sadly fading in the public mind, so too is much of our great American History. The news of the day is an indication of the current tendency to ignore, as we did then, the warning signs of trouble coming. Now, as then, we seem to be poorly prepared for the dangers in our future that may be foretold by our history.

Those shocking incidents that have plunged us so quickly from peace to war are much more ominous when magnified by the nuclear threat. The recall of that 1941 debacle in current news was overshadowed by more temporal reports of much less impact on our nation and the world. It is not easily acknowledged that our American freedoms and way of life are constantly threatened and at risk.

The pie-in-the-sky promises that drags nations into a lock-step system under dictatorships are now on our shores. Our fight against those limitations of fair opportunities of free enterprise and expression are under constant attack now from within, and without this country. The freedoms of this democracy cannot be well served by a continuous barrage of new laws containing hundreds or even thousands of pages of bureaucratic dialog which is deliberately designed to be ambiguous for the discretion of a multitude of interpreters. These result in a preponderous increase in the bureaucracy of government.

Simply stated our nation thrives when government "by the people

and for the people" is the goal. If that government is motivated to control and command the people's pursuit of free opportunity and enterprise, it is basically contrary to our great Constitution, which sadly, some now say is an obsolete instrument, though they are under oath to follow it. I believe that is what we fought for in 1776, 1812, 1861, 1917 and 1941. What do you think? Tell your representatives.

*Eldon 'Bud' Lawson*

Bud, the time has come when the BY LAWS of the Association require you to yield the gavel of President. All members say "Well Done, thou Good and Faithful Servant!"

But as usual, you take on another duty—Treasurer in addition to your long time service as Historian and keeper of our Memorabilia. If only we could find other members as dedicated as you, the Vice President chair would not be vacant.

**Of the four wars in I my lifetime, none came about because the U.S. was too strong**

*Ronald Reagan*

\*\*\*\*\*EDITOR'S AND MEMBER'S REPORTS\*\*\*\*\*

A note from Nancy Solomon, Hostess of the 2010 Reunion: "The refund to the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association, Inc. for the 2010 Reunion is \$6,606.25. Let me know if you require additional information from the 2010 Reunion for the January Newsletter."

Nancy, you have closed out your duties in grand style. We thank you for a job WELL DONE!

In a letter to, Bud Lawson, Jim Quinn included the following with his request for approval of his classic calendar project. "My brother, John Terrance "Jack" Quinn, 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, Radio/Gunner, was a member of Bill Craig's Crew, stationed at Clark Field, PI, in early 1945. Jack substituted, on the Jon Ray, Pilot and Ray Schwartzman, Co-Pilot crew, on June 12, 1945. They suffered a crash in the Yangtze River close to Shanghai, China. Jack was the extra gunner among the eight killed in the crash. Three men were successful in evading the Japanese soldiers and returned home in September 1945.

"In the spring of 2004, two of my sons accompanied me to Haimen, China. We visited the crash site. A monument to the crew has been erected. Several local villagers, who had hidden the survivors, had keepsakes of this important event for their village.

"Upon returning home from China, I looked up the survivors and enjoyed phone conversations and correspondence with two of them. I also had the honor of meeting Albert Garnto, Flight Engineer, from Dublin, GA and Marvin Nester, Radio, from Lakeland, FL. Al Garnto mentioned that he appreciated the calendars we sent him over the past few years."

*Jim Quinn*

Received the following request from John Purdy: "My Mother, Margaret Purdy, wife of Donald Purdy, 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, Pilot, has had to move out of her home of many years. After a brief illness, she is doing much better and continues to enjoy the newsletter and so do I.

"Please change her address to; Mrs Margaret Purdy, 20325 79<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Kenmore, WA 98028."

Thank you,

*John Purdy*

October 20, I received a phone call from one of our members, who upon receiving his newsletter, he noted PD-07 beside his name/address. He wish to know what was the meaning of this notation. I had to inform him that he was three years behind in payment of his dues. He replied that he would become a Life Time

member as soon as he could send his payment to Elaine. So all of you, please let me know what your status is and correct any discrepancy. P=PAID, D=DUES, XX=YEAR PAID! Got it!

Received a note from **Athill Irvine, 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, Radio/Gunner**, informing of his change of address: 7 ELGIN PLACE #411, DUNEDIN, FL 34698-8511 and phone (727) 738-8511.

I received an e-mail from **Richard Blake** which had the following request: "I'm writing to inquire about **Major Thomas Nixon Charles** from Florida, who commanded the 13<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron (Jan 18, 1942-May 22, 1942) and the 403<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Squadron (May 22, 1942-Nov 29, 1942).

"I'm seeking information on behalf of his nephew **Charles Crews**. Mr. Crews is 83 and was in the Navy during WWII. Mr. Crews knows that his uncle was lost during a mission sometime early in the war, but didn't know the details of this event. Mr. Crews wasn't sure what bomb group his uncle was in, but I entered his name into [www.wwiimemorial.com](http://www.wwiimemorial.com) and found his MIA listing. I was able to then find Major Charles Squadron, Group and your website.

"Do you know of any missing air crew reports (MACR) on Major Thomas Nixon Charles or any pertinent information of this event?"

*Richard Blake*

I have sent Richard two short reports from the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group History (January 1941-February 1944) compiled by V Bomber Command. If any of you have additional knowledge of this event, please pass it on to Richard via [<rblake.richard@gmail.com>](mailto:rblake.richard@gmail.com)

After receiving one of **Joe Snyder's** masterpiece walking canes, I asked him to provide a list of those who have been so honored. It started upon the 1997 retirement of **President Jim Murphy**. Since then Joe has created canes for **Bill Wilson, Bob Watson, Sam Commons, Max Axelsen, Jim Cherkauer, Roger Kettleison, Bob Butler, Chuck Rauch, Nancy Solomon, Eldon "Bud" Lawson, Jim Diffenderfer, Andy Anderson** and **Ed Gammill**. Joe closed his note to me with: "Ed, here is the list of my 43rd heros. I wish I could make a cane for everyone in the group." Joe you are our HERO and we appreciate and admire you Master Wood Carving talent.

On Pearl Harbor Day, I received this bit of history from **Robert Vargas, 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, Navigator**: "About two weeks ago, I received a call from a **Bill Hunter**, who was seeking information on "LULU BELLE" B-17F, S/N 41-245358. His father, **Charles Hunter**, was the Radio Operator on my crew. Bill had contacted **Jim Dieffenderfer**, who referred him to me.

"I mentioned to Bill, that I had photos of the aircraft and of the crew and that I would send copies to him. After reviewing photos, I was able to send him a good set of LULU BELLE and crew. Obviously, Bill had many questions about his Dad and the crew. Here is the brief history I gave him:

"In early July 1942, a cadre of 10 Flight Crews were assembled in Panama and flown to Hamilton Field with a destination unknown. While at Hamilton, combat crews were formed and assigned to new B-17F aircraft. I was assigned as Navigator on B-17F S/N 41-24358. The other crew members were, **Capt. Franklyn T. Green, Pilot; Lt. Charles L. Anderson, Co-Pilot; Lt. David M. Anderson, Bombardier; S/Sgt. Earl H. Kennedy, Flight Engineer; S/Sgt. Charles N. Hunter, Radio; Sgt Marvin W. Wolverton, Asst. Engineer; PFC Wesley H Chadwick, Asst. Radio and Sgt. Philip Bosso, Tail Gunner.**

"30 July 1942, we departed Hamilton Field for Hickam Air Field, Hawaii. Capt. Green was Flight Leader of the four aircraft consisting of our aircraft and AC 41-24382 (**Lt. Lewis Anderson, Pilot**); AC 41-24403 (**Lt. Edwin Reeder, Pilot**) and AC 41-24353 (**Lt. James Murphy, Pilot**). Upon our arrival the final destination was still unknown, but at Hickam we received orders to proceed to Australia. 1 Aug 1942, we continued on to Australia by the way of Christmas Island, Canton Island, Fiji, New Caladonia. On 6 Aug 1942, we arrived at Amberly RAAF station, Brisbane, Australia. After a few hours of rest, we were directed to proceed to Charleville located about 400 miles due west of Brisbane.

"We remained on Charleville for 12 days. During this time the aircraft were prepared for combat. The installation of armor, guns and munitions, after which, the aircraft were flight tested. We flew into Mareeba and became attached to the 19<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group to receive briefing on their combat experience. After a brief visit to

Torrens Creek, where the 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron was based, we returned to Mareeba and began flying combat missions with the 19<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. I flew my first mission 26 Aug 1942 with crews from the 28<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron.

"About the first of September, while I was on duty as the Officer of the Day, I met an aircraft arriving from Brisbane, on board was **Major Benn**. I did not know who he was, but he began asking me many questions about myself and conditions in Mareeba. I happened to mention that I was new and recently arrived with a group from Panama. I also mentioned that our crews were spread out between Townsville, Mareeba and Torrens Creek. We had a pretty good discussion and while driving to Headquarters, he told me that **Gen. Kenny** had sent him to Mareeba to reorganize our squadron and that the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group would relieve the 19<sup>th</sup> who were scheduled to return home.

"Major Benn became the Commanding Officer of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron and we began operating as a unit. In evaluating our operations Major Benn became concerned that although we were successful in bombing major land base installations, we could not sink many of the surface vessels. Major Benn began to develop a new technique which he called "Skip Bombing." After 3 or 4 weeks of practice and testing we felt we were ready to "Skip Bomb." On 23 Oct 1942, Major Benn led a flight of 8 aircraft to "Skip Bomb" ships in the Rabaul Harbor. Major Benn selected to fly with our crew on this first "Skip Bombing" mission. Capt. Green was in the left seat and Major Benn occupied the right seat. It was a very successful mission and the beginning of "Skip Bombing."

"Most of our original crews remained intact, but we lost the Flight Engineer when Sgt. Kennedy transferred to Headquarters. He was replaced by **Sgt. Edward Johnson** and **Sgt. Scoggins** came aboard as the Photographer. Our crew membership remained this way until Dec42, when Capt Green was transferred to become the Commanding Officer of the 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron. **Lt. Francis Denault** became our Pilot.

"In Jan43, our squadron moved to Port Moresby, New Guinea. This same month the aircraft S/N 41-24358 was named "LULU BELLE," along with an appropriate "tuff" looking, cigar smoking female in a belligerent stance painted on the nose of the aircraft. I believe the name was selected by the Maintenance and Flight Crew enlisted men. I knew nothing about how it was done, but I was surprised when I saw LULU BELLE on the aircraft.

"In the 1942-1943 era, our crew was one of the outstanding crews of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group. We were also a successful and a very-very lucky crew. All of the original members flew over 40 missions and well over 400 combat hours. The crew, as of 1 April 1943, had 51 missions, 7 Zeros, 7 Ships and one twin engine A/C. They were also awarded 10 Silver Stars, 11 Dist. Flying Crosses, 32 Air Medals, 5 Purple Hearts and 3 Presidential Unit Citations.

"The morning of 12 April 1943, **Capt. McCullar** and crew crashed on take-off. That evening I flew my last mission #44, We took off around 18:00 to bomb shipping at Bogia Harbor (near Wewak) on the northern coast of New Guinea. It was a perfect night for "Skip Bombing" with the moon behind us and our target very visible in the harbor. Denault and Andy made a perfect run on a ship but our bombs did not release. We foolishly (which was a No-No for "Skip Bombing") decided to try again. The enemy was ready for us and must have aimed all their guns at us. We were very lucky and were able to pull up and away. We received major damage to the aircraft and I was seriously wounded. Frank and Andy were able to nurse LULU BELLE over the mountains on to our base at Moresby and made an emergency landing (low on fuel).

"I was quickly checked by the Flight Surgeon and transferred to an ambulance for transport to the 10<sup>th</sup> Evac. Hospital approximately 10 miles away. I remained hospitalized for 6 weeks before being evacuated to Hamilton Airfield for further treatment. While I was in the hospital, our crew went on leave to Sydney. LULU BELLE was out of commission for 6 weeks for major repairs and engine change.

"In mid November 1944, while flying with Air Transport Command (ATC), we stopped at a new ATC Base at Lae, New Guinea. Lae was a strong Japanese base in 1941-1943 and we often dropped bombs on the runway. In the afternoon, I was at Base Ops. on the Flight Line and noticed a shiny B-17 landing. When it pulled up to the ramp, I noticed that it was 124358, my old plane. All the war paint and insignias had been removed, also it was stripped and being used for transportation. I had a nice chat with the Crew Chief and walked around the plane showing him all the patch work.

"This all for now. I want to send you the photos and if possible, please add to our website. Perhaps they will be of interest to all who visit Kensmen. Years ago, I sent some of this information to Larry Hickey, but I doubt we will ever see his book.

"Sorry about my scribbling, but I cannot type anymore and have trouble writing. Guess I am in fairly good shape at 94. My wife Olga is doing fairly well at an assisted living facility."

Best of Regards to All,

*Roger E. Vargas*

I received a note from Francis Langland 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, Mechanic/Gunner, who sent the following Irish Prayer which appeared in the Wichita newsletter Paper.

**The words of an Old Irish Prayer that Patricia Walton Shelby herself chose to leave her family and friends and now shared with the Mississippi Daughters:**

**Take time to work – it is the price of success.**

**Take time to think – it is the source of power.**

**Take time to play – it is the secret of perpetual youth.**

**Take time to read – it is the foundation of wisdom.**

**Take time to be friendly – it is the road to happiness.**

**Take time to dream – it is hitching your wagon to a star.**

**Take time to love and be loved – it is the privilege of the Gods.**

**Take time to look around – the day is too short to be selfish.**

**Take time to laugh – it is the music of the soul.**

Susan Lanson and Michael La Vean are busy planning our 2011 Reunion. The initial schedule of events is presented as an attachment. Please start your planning to attend.

The 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association has an invitation, from Col. Paul M. Kucharek, Commanding Officer of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Operations Group, to attend the redesignation of the 43rd Operations Group to the 43<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Group. This letter is an attachment. Hopeful some of our members will be able to attend.

In saying well-done to Bud, I mentioned the need for active participation in the Association's operations. During one of my searches for information, I found the attached photographic collage of many members who have contributed. Hope you enjoy seeing these helpers again.. I can assure there are many more whose names you see in our Newsletter.

I am also attaching a very interesting story that tells of the beginnings of an Air Force ritual. It came to me from a Flying Friend and member of the Knights of the Round Engine Table. The only requirement to be a member is you must have had Round Engine experience. I have been a member for many years and have met some very interesting airman and heard many interesting stories, some from men over 100 years old with flight certificates signed by one of the Wright Brothers!

Our Frank Hohmann, 65th Squadron, Flight Engineer, responded, via a letter to the Editor of AIR CLASSICS Magazine concerning the final status of SWAMP GHOST the B-17 recovered by Fred Hagen. The Editor found Frank's one of the more interesting of the 1200 responses received. It is present below.

## THE SWAMP GHOST QUESTION

Our recent mini-poll on whether the Boeing B-17E *Swamp Ghost* should be rebuilt to flying condition brought in some 1200 reader responses. Of these, 97% responded that they would like to see this rare veteran take to the air and many offered to donate funds or time to making the project happen. The remaining 3% divided between wanting the plane displayed as found, restored to static display condition, or, in the case of two misguided individuals, returned to its New Guinea crash site. One of the more interesting letters came from Frank Hohmann, who replied: "I am Frank Hohmann. During the war I was with the 28th Bomb Squadron, 19th Bomb Group, before transferring to the 65th BS, 43rd BG, in November 1942. I was a flight engineer after three-months of training at the 19th Wing Tact A&E school at Rio Hata, Republic of Panama, where I graduated in January 1942. After completing 83 combat missions, I was returned to the USA on 6 June 1943.

"I am now over 90-years-old and met Alfred

Hagen [who recovered *Swamp Ghost*] at one of the early 43rd reunions when he talked about his adventures in New Guinea, searching for aircraft wrecks.

After the war, I had the same interest but the people I approached thought I was out of my mind. I have followed Mr. Hagen's story with very great interest. I just knew he would succeed and I am very proud of Mr. Hagen.

"I was in good health until 2008 when a doctor prescribed medicine that reacted with other medications I was taking. I was partially paralyzed on the left side, but I now can talk clearly and walk short distances with no support and longer distances with a cane, but I am wondering how I can attend next year's reunion.

"I took my whole family for a ride in the EAA's B-17G that was touring the east coast in 2009. We discussed what it cost to restore the plane and keep it flying. I would hate to think of anything bad happening to *Swamp Ghost* if it was restored to flying condition. I really would like to know that *Swamp Ghost* is being cared for like the national treasure she is. I know I will not live long enough to even hear that *Swamp Ghost* is back in condition for all future generations to see and marvel over the fact that young men helped win WWII in such aircraft. My vote is to restore *Swamp Ghost* to static condition only."

**\*\* \*\*\*\*\* MEMORIALS\*\*\*\*\* \*\***

An e-mail from Jim Cherkauer reports that **Albert Pepe, 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Armament Officer** died September 1, 2010.

October 18, an e-mail from Bud Lawson: "A call from **Maureen McAillister** reports that her husband, **C. Fred McAillister, HDQRS, Medic/Tactician**, had passed away in Dallas, TX last week. Her call on October 14 was same day as the funeral. They attended the San Antonio Reunion last year".

Fred served as a HDQRS Director of the Association for many years.

A telephone call from **Sharon Howgate**, daughter of **Jesse Fulton, 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Bombardier**, reported the death of her father November 3, 2010.

*Nothing beautiful in this world is ever lost...  
Those we cherish will always live on in our hearts and memory.*

**\*\*\*\*\*43<sup>rd</sup> HUMOR\*\*\*\*\***

**From Jim Eide**

Charlie's wife, Lucy had been after him for several weeks to paint the seat on their toilet. Finally, he got around to doing it while Lucy was out. After finishing, he left to take care of another matter before she returned.

She came in and undressed to take a shower. Before getting in the shower, she sat on the toilet. As she tried to stand up, she realized that the not-quite-dry epoxy paint had glued her to the toilet seat. About this time, Charlie returned home and realized her predicament.

They both pushed and pulled without any success whatsoever. Finally, in desperation, Charlie undid the toilet seat bolts. Lucy wrapped a sheet around herself and Charlie drove her to the hospital emergency room. The ER Doctor got her into a position where he could study how to free her (Try to have a mental picture of this!) Lucy tried to lighten the embarrassment of it all by saying, "Well Doctor, I'll bet you've never seen anything like this before." The Doctor Replied, "Actually, I've seen lots of them. I just never saw one mounted and framed!"

**From Max Axelsen**

An elderly man is stopped by the police around 1:00AM and asked where he is going at this time of the night. The man replies, "I am going to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the human body."

The officer then asks, "Really? Who is giving that lecture at this time of night?"

The man replies, "My wife!"

**For Our Golfers**

Three elderly golfers are walking down the fairway. "Sixty is the worst age to be," said the 60-year-old, "You always feel like you have to pee. And most of the time nothing happens."

"Ah, that's nothing," said the 70-year-old. "When you're 70, you don't have a bowel movement anymore. You take laxatives, eat bran, you sit on the toilet all day and nothing happens."

"Actually," said the 80-year-old. "Eighty is the worst age of all. "Do you have trouble peeing too?" asked the 60-year-old"

"No, I pee every morning at 6:00 AM. I pee like a racehorse; no problem at all." "Do you have trouble having a bowel movement?"

"No, I have one every morning at 6:30 AM." Puzzled with this he 60-year-old said, "Let's get this straight. You pee every morning at 6:00 AM and poop every morning at 6:30 AM. So what's so tough about being 80?"

"I don't wake up until seven!"

\*\*\*\*\*INFORMATION\*\*\*\*\*

This newsletter is published four times a year - **January, April, July and October**. Please send **membership applications** and **dues payments** to **Elain Pierce, P.O. Box 84, Snyder, TX 79550**. Please keep in mind that annual dues are **\$20.00 per year** and life membership is **\$100.00**. Please make the check to the **43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association**.

Send items for the **Newsletter** to **Ed Gammill** at **5337 E. Earll Drive, Phoenix, AZ 85018-8045** or via e-mail to **Edgammill@aol.com**. Any material receive after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to a publication month probably will not appear in that publication.

The Postal Service **will not forward** this newsletter. If you change your address **please notify Ed Gammill** at the address shown above. Send all changes of phone numbers, etc. also.

\*\*\*\*\*REUNION INFORMATION\*\*\*\*\*

The 2011 Reunion will be in Arlington, VA. Hostess and Host will be **Susan Lanson** and **Michael La Vean**, who have have established September 15 thru 20 to be the date and have selected a facility (hotel) They are presently working to finalize a series of events and activities. The attachment displays the present status.

\*\*\*\*\*ATTACHMENTS\*\*\*\*\*

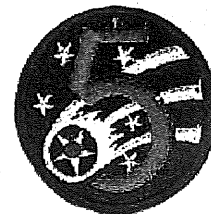
- 1-2011 Reunion Flyer
- 2-Col. Paul M. Kucharek's Letter
- 3-Photographic Collage
- 4-"One More Roll"--- Capt. Coffee's Toast
- 5\_Obituary





43rd BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION, INC.

"KEN'S MEN"



## **2011 REUNION !**

Sheraton National, Arlington, Virginia

Special rate of 129.00    September 15th—20th

**Make your reservations early and ask for one of the few  
rooms with a view of Arlington, the beautiful  
Missing man Memorial and downtown Washington DC !**

To make your reservations now, Call: 1-888-627-8210

Or Online: <http://Starwoodmeeting.com/book/43rdbomb>

Beautifully appointed and conveniently located, the Sheraton National has retained it's charm by staying quite small in many respects. Our memorabilia room will be centrally located between the downstairs dining room and cocktail lounge.

### **Just some of the events planned for 2011**

- \*Medal Presentations by Senator Levin**
- \*Arlington Tour with Wreath Presentations**
- \*Guest Speakers**
- \*Tour of WWII Memorial**
- \*Air and Space Museum Tour**
- \*Medal Presentations by Representative of the  
Philippine Government**



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS 43D AIRLIFT WING (AMC)  
POPE AIR FORCE BASE NORTH CAROLINA

Dear 43d Bombardment Group Association,

31 August 2010

My name is Col Paul Kucharek and I am currently the 43d Operations Group Commander at Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina. We were activated on 1 Apr 1997 at Pope flying C-130 Hercules aircraft. It has been almost 70 years since the 43d Bombardment Group, Heavy was established. I appreciate the proud heritage that you started in the World War II Pacific campaign. The bravery and valor you displayed in your long journey to retake the Pacific were realized in your Multiple Distinguished Unit Citations.

As you removed the Axis powers from the Pacific, we have been steadfastly pursuing current National Security objectives. Since 1997, we have been working closely with our Army brethren during our Joint Forcible Entry Exercises to further develop our nation's tactical insertion force. Operationally, we provided forces in support of Operations SOUTHERN WATCH, JOINT FORGE, and ATLAS RESPONSE. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, various 43 OG airmen and equipment supported and continue to support Operations ENDURING FREEDOM, NOBLE EAGLE, and IRAQI FREEDOM. Since April 2001, members of the 43d Operations Group have continually supported our Overseas Contingency Operations. Most recently the 43d Operations Group was the go-to unit for Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE. This no-fail Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief in support of Haiti to mitigate near term human suffering and accelerate recovery was the first-ever movement of a Brigade Combat Team by air. The Airmen of the 43d Operations Group were the key to this successful mission.

As in 1952 when the 43d Bombardment Group was inactivated, Pope is going through a time of change. Pope Air Force Base will transfer all real property to the Army on 1 March 2011. However, the men and women of the 43d will continue to make history under a new name with the same great lineage. I would like to invite you to inactivation of the 43d Airlift Wing and the redesignation of the 43d Operations Group to the 43d Airlift Group at 10 a.m. on 25 February at Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina.

Thank you again for your service to our nation and the legacy you established under the 43d Bombardment Group. We hope you will be able to join us in February for what is sure to be another memorable event for the Gryphon Warriors of the 43d.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul M. Kucharek".

PAUL M. KUCHARER, Colonel, USAF  
Commander

**Lineage and Honors  
Of the  
43d Operations Group (AMC)**

**LINEAGE.** Established 43d Bombardment Group, Heavy, on 20 November 1940. Activated on 15 January 1941. Redesignated 43d Bombardment Group, Heavy on 21 September 1943. Inactivated on 29 April 1946. Redesignated 43d Bombardment Group, Very Heavy and activated on 1 October 1946. Redesignated 43d Bombardment Group, Medium on 2 July 1948. Inactivated on 16 June 1952. Redesignated 43d Operations Group, and activated on 1 June 1992. Inactivated on 1 July 1994. Activated on 1 April 1997.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** General Headquarters, Air Force (later, Air Force Combat Command), 15 January 1941; Northeast Air District (later, 1<sup>st</sup> Air Force), January 1941; I Bomber Command, c. 5 September 1941; United States Army Forces in Australia. c. 28 March 1942; Allied Air Forces, Southwest Pacific Areas, 18 April 1942; Fifth Air Force, 3 September 1942, V Bomber Command, 5 September 1942; Far East Air Forces, 3 December 1945 - 29 April 1946. Fifteenth Air Force, 1 October 1946; Eighth Air Force, 19 November 1946; 43d Bombardment Wing, 17 November 1947 - 16 June 1952 (attached to 3d Air Division, 16 August - 16 November 1949). 43d Air Refueling Wing, 1 June 1992 - 1 July 1994. 43d Airlift Wing 1 April 1997- Present.

**HONORS.**

**SERVICE STREAMERS.** None.

**CAMPAIGN STREAMERS.** *World War II:* Antisubmarine, American Theatre; Air Offensive, Japan; China Defensive; Papua; Guadalcanal; Northern Solomons; New Guinea; Bismarck Archipelago; Western Pacific; Leyte; Luzon; Southern Philippines; China Offensive.

**ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY STREAMERS.** None.

**DECORATIONS.** *Distinguished Unit Citations:* Papua, August 1942 - 23 January 1943; Bismarck Sea, 2 - 4 March 1943. *Air Force Outstanding Unit Award:* 1 June 1992 - 30 June 1993; 1 July 1998 - 30 June 2000; 1 Jun 2002-31 May 2004; 1 June 2004 - 31 May 2006. *Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (WWII).*

**OPERATIONS.** Trained with B-17, B-18, A-29, and LB-30 aircraft for bombardment operations during most of 1941. From December 1941 until February 1942 flew antisubmarine patrols along the New England coast. Moved to Southwest Pacific via Capetown, South Africa February to March 1942. Equipped with B-17s attacked Japanese shipping in the Netherlands East Indies and the Bismarck Archipelago from bases in Australia, New Guinea, and Owi Island between August 1942 and January 1943. Earned a DUC for missions over Papua, New Guinea from August 1942 and January 1943. Used skip bombing to sink Japanese ships during the battle of Bismarck Sea, 2-4 March 1943 for which the unit earned a second DUC and destroyed a large enemy convoy carrying reinforcements to New Guinea. Converted to B-24s May - September 1943. Provided support for ground forces on New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, Yap, Palau, Celebes, Halmehera, and the Southern Philippines in 1943 and 1944. The group conducted long-range raids on oil refineries on Ceeran and Borneo late in the war. After moving to the Philippines in November 1944, the group attacked shipping along the Asiatic coast and struck factories, airfields, and other installations in China and Formosa. Supported ground forces in Luzon. The unit moved to Ie Shima in July 1945 and conducted raids against airfields and railways in Japan and against shipping in the Inland Sea and Sea of Japan. Moved on paper to the Philippines in December 1945 and inactivated in 1946. Activated in the US in 1946 and conducted long-range test missions, including the first nonstop flight around the world (26 February to 2 March 1949), accomplished by Capt James G. Gallagher and his crew in a B-50 called "Lucky Lady II". In August of 1949 deployed to England for 3 months to train. Not operational after 10 February 1951, with flying squadrons attached directly to the 43d Wing for operations. Inactivated on 16 June 1952. Flew KC-135 refueling and training missions from 1 June 1992 until 1 July 1994, when replaced by the 43d Air Refueling Group. Missions supported included Operations PROVIDE RELIEF/RESTORE HOPE and SOUTHERN WATCH. Activated at Pope AFB on 1 April 1997 with two flying squadrons of C-130s, an AES, and a aerial port, the group's mission focused on providing the Army's XVIII Airborne Corps the airlift and training assets to be the first call forced insertion tactical force. During this period, the group provided forces in support of Operations SOUTHERN WATCH, JOINT FORGE, and ATLAS RESPONSE. Other airlift missions included South and Central America embassy support, presidential support, and humanitarian airlift. Various 43 OG airmen and equipment supported anti-terrorist contingency operations during Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and NOBLE EAGLE in 2001 and 2002. In April 2004, Operation IRAQ Freedom began commands continuous support from the member of the 43 Operations Group.

## ASSIGNMENTS

General Headquarters, Air Force	15 January 1941	January 1941
Northeast Air District	January 1941	c. 5 September 1941
I Bomber Command	5 September 1941	c. 28 March 1942
United States Army Forces in Australia	c. 28 March 1942	18 April 1942
Allied Air Forces, Southwest Pacific Areas	18 April 1942	3 December 1945
Fifth Air Force	3 December 1945	5 September 1942
V Bomber Command	5 September 1942	3 December 1945
Far East Air Forces	3 December 1945	29 April 1946
Fifteenth Air Force	1 October 1946	19 November 1946
Eighth Air Force	19 November 1946	17 November 1947
43d Bombardment Wing	17 November 1947	16 June 1952
attached to 3d Air Division, 16 August - 16 November 1949		
43d Air Refueling Wing	1 June 1992	1 July 1994
43d Airlift Wing	1 April 1997	Present

## COMPONENTS

<i>Squadrons</i>		
2d Airlift	1 April 1997	Present
2d Air Refueling (attached)	1 July 1949	16 September 1950
3d Aerial Port	1 April 1997	20 September 2002
41 <sup>st</sup> Airlift	1 April 1997	16 February 2007
28 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling	1 June 1992	15 May 1994
43d Air Refueling	19 July 1948	16 June 1952
43d Aeromedical Evacuation	1 April 1997	Present
43d Operational Support Squadron	1 June 1992	1 July 1994
	1 April 1997	Present
63d Bombardment	15 January 1941	29 April 1946
(detached 10 February 1951 - 16 June 1952)	1 October 1946	16 June 1952
64 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment	15 January 1941	29 April 1946
(detached 10 February 1951 - 16 June 1952)	1 October 1946	16 June 1952
65 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment	15 January 1941	29 April 1946
(detached 10 February 1951 - 16 June 1952)	1 October 1946	16 June 1952
91 <sup>st</sup> Air Refueling	1 June 1992	1 July 1994
97 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling	1 October 1992	1 April 1994
307 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling (attached)	16 September 1950	9 February 1951
350 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling	1 October 1993	1 July 1994
403d Bombardment	15 January 1941	29 April 1946
905 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling	1 June 1992	30 January 1994
906 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling	1 June 1992	30 January 1994
917 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling	1 October 1993	1 July 1994

## STATIONS

Langley Field, Virginia	15 January 1941	28 August 1941
Bangor, Maine	28 August 1941	17 February 1942
Sydney, Australia	28 March 1942	
Torrens Creek, Australia	c. 1 August 1942	
Port Moresby, New Guinea	14 September 1942	
Dobodura, New Guinea	10 December 1943	
Nadzab, New Guinea	4 March 1944	
Owi, Schouten Islands	2 July 1944	
Tacloban, Leyte	c. 15 November 1944	
Clark Field, Luzon	16 March 1945	
Ie Shima	26 July 1945	
Ft William McKinley, Luzon	10 December 1945	29 April 1946
Davis Monthan Field (later AFB), Arizona	1 October 1946	16 June 1952
Deployed to RAF Station Marham, England	16 August 1949	16 November 1949
Malmstrom AFB, Montana	1 June 1992	1 July 1994
Pope AFB, North Carolina	1 April 1997	Present

## COMMANDERS

Lt Col Harold D. Smith	15 January 1941	1 March 1941
Lt Col Francis B. Valentine	1 March 1941	18 February 1942
Major Conrad H. Diehl, JR	18 February 1942	21 October 1942
Col Roger M. Ramey	21 October 1942	30 March 1943
Lt Col John A. Roberts	30 March 1943	24 May 1943
Col Harry J. Hawthorne	24 May 1943	18 November 1943
Lt Col Edward W. Scott	18 November 1943	8 February 1944
Col Harry J. Hawthorne	8 February 1944	18 September 1944
Col James T. Pettus	18 September 1944	8 September 1945
Major Paul B. Hansen	8 September 1945	29 April 1946
Col James C. Selser, JR	5 October 1946	c. April 1948
Col William E. Eubank, JR (later Major General)	April 1948	July 1948
Col Dalene E. Bailey	July 1948	3 January 1949
Col Alvan N. Moore	3 January 1949	16 June 1952
Col Larry L. Evanoff	1 June 1992	1 July 1994
Col Gordon M. Ettenson	1 April 1997	30 April 1999
Col Jimmie L. Simmons JR	30 April 1999	26 April 2001
Col Alexander M. McDowell	26 April 2001	22 August 2003
Col William J. Changose	22 August 2003	August 2004
Col Gerald E. Szpila	August 2004	21 June 2006
Col Michael H. Thornton	21 June 2006	28 July 2008
Col Donald F. Kimminau	29 July 2008	28 Jun 2010
Col Paul K. Kucharek	28 Jun 2010	Present

## AIRCRAFT

B-17	1941-1943
B-18	1941
B-25	1941
PT-17	1941
A-29	1941
LB-30	1941
B-24	1943-1946
B-29	1946-1948
B-50	1948-1951
KC-135R	1992-1994
C-12	1994
C-130H	1997-2008

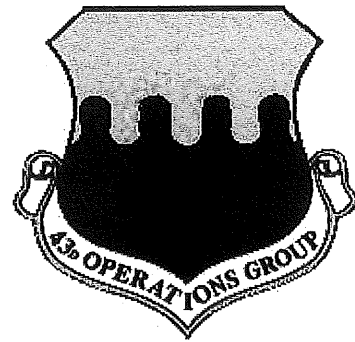
### *43d Operations Group Unit Emblem*

#### *Significance Statement*

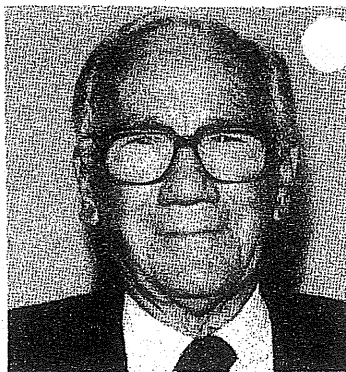
Blue and yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The nebuly fess reflects the wing's interlocking of personnel and.

Note: All similarly numbered groups assigned to the 43d Airlift Wing will use the wing's emblem. The wing emblem will bear the wing's motto in the scroll, while each group will display the appropriate group designation in the scroll.

**Approved: 1 April 1997**



**Motto:**  
none



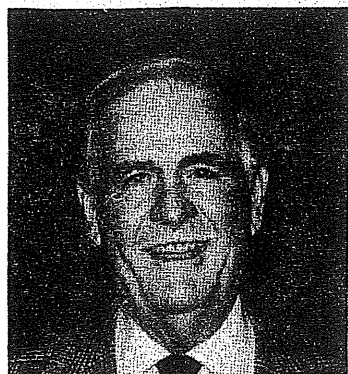
PRESIDENT  
Bill Wilson



VICE PRESIDENT  
Dale Barr



SECTY - TREAS  
Lloyd Boren



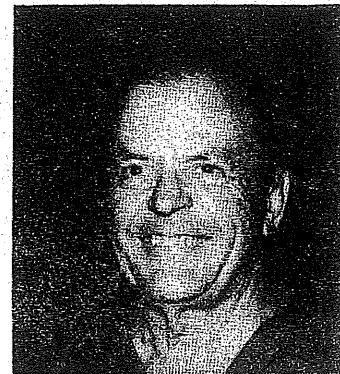
FOUNDER & PAST PRES.  
Bob Butler



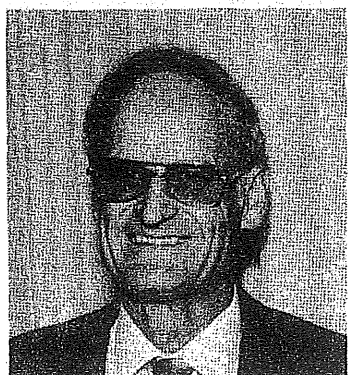
DIRECTOR & PAST PRES.  
George White



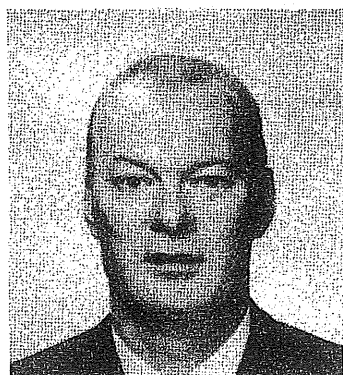
DIRECTOR  
Jim Pettus



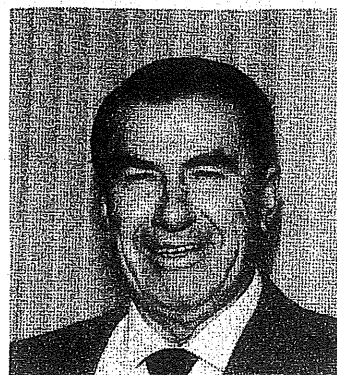
DIRECTOR  
Max Axelsen



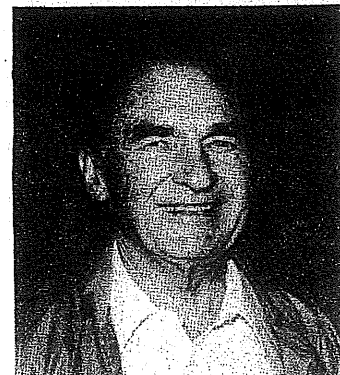
DIRECTOR  
Odis Cleere



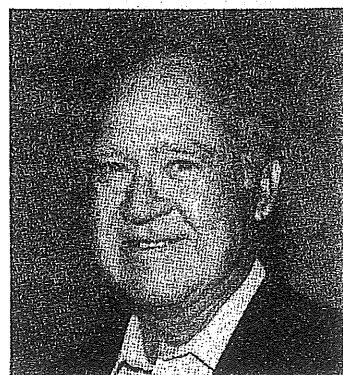
DIRECTOR  
Dick Wood



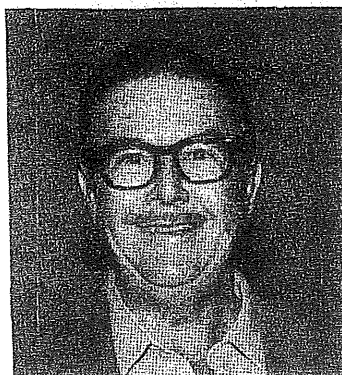
DIRECTOR  
Bob Cooper



DIRECTOR  
Nick Arabinko



DIRECTOR  
Jim Harcrow



DIRECTOR  
Bob Watson





Billy

Capt. Jerry Coffee, USN (ret) [a Vietnam POW] wrote:

One night during a bombing raid on Hanoi, I peeked out of my cell and watched a flight of four F-105s during their bombing run. As they pulled up, it was obvious that lead was badly hit. Trailing smoke, he broke from the formation and I watched the damaged bird until it disappeared from sight. I presumed the worst. As I lay there in my cell reflecting on the image, I composed a toast to the unfortunate pilot and all the others who had gone before him.

On New Year's Eve 1968, Captain Tom Storey and I were in the Stardust section of Hoa Lo (wa-low) Prison. I whispered the toast under the door to Tom. Tom was enthralled, and despite the risk of terrible punishment, insisted that I repeat it several more times until he had it committed to memory. He then promised me that when the time came, and they were again free men, he would give the toast at the first Dining-In he attended. For you civilians, a "Dining-In" is a dreary formal affair with drinks, dinner, and forced joviality and comradeship where officers get to dress up like the head waiters in "The Merry Widow" -- that's the American version; I've heard that the Brits, who created the damn things, have a rollicking good time.

Tom's first assignment following release in 1973 was to the U.S. Air Force Academy. During that same year the Academy hosted the Annual Conference for General Officers and Those Associated Dining-In. The jovial clinking of glasses accompanied all the traditional speeches and toasts. Then it was Tom's turn. Remembering his promise so many years earlier, he proposed Jerry's "One More Roll." When he was finished there was total silence.

**We toast our hearty comrades, who have fallen from the sky,  
And were gently caught by God's own hands to be with him on high.  
To dwell among the soaring clouds they have known so well before,  
From victory roll to tail chase at heavens' very door  
And as we fly among them there, we're sure to hear their plea:  
Take care, my friend, Watch your six, and do one more roll for me.**

[A toast to all our comrades -- POWs, missing in action, living or dead, whatever their duty, whatever their war, whatever their uniform. Bless them all].

## Albert Pepe, 91, wine store owner, WWII veteran

Dec. 30, 1918 — Sept. 1, 2010



Albert F. Pepe of Snyder, a World War II veteran who went to work in the family business, died Sept. 1 in the Center for Hospice & Palliative Care, Cheektowaga. He was 91.

Born in Buffalo, Mr. Pepe was a 1936 graduate of Lafayette High School and received a bachelor's degree from Canisius College in 1941.

After college, he enlisted as an aviator cadet in the Army Air Corps. He graduated from the former Lowry Air Force Base's technical training command in 1942 and was commissioned a second lieutenant.

Mr. Pepe joined the 19th Heavy Bombardment Group in

northern Australia in 1942, then transferred to the 43rd Bombardment Group, which flew B-24 Liberators in combat. His military service took him to New Guinea, Dutch East Indies, the Philippines and Okinawa, where he attained the rank of major.

Returning to this area in 1945, Mr. Pepe joined relatives in running Hodge Liquor, a family business established by his grandfather and uncle. He was instrumental in establishing a chapter of Les Amis du Vin (The Friends of Wine), a national wine appreciation society, in Buffalo.

Mr. Pepe traveled to France and California to visit vineyards and wineries, to better familiarize himself with the production and sale of fine wines. He retired in 1983.

Skiing, golf and bowling

were among his interests. He was a former member of Transit Valley Country Club and Buffalo Yacht Club, and a fourth-degree member of Knights of Columbus.

Survivors include his wife of 61 years, the former Mary Louise Trueba; a daughter, Jane Adams; and three sons, Thomas, James and Mark.

Services are private.

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### WARNING

*Law enforcement agencies and funeral professionals warn that criminals have been known to prey on grieving families while they are not home during a funeral or calling hours. They suggest that a friend be asked to watch the home when families have to be away.*